

It has come to my attention that the Federal Communications Commission launched a proceeding designed to eliminate or dramatically weaken two longstanding safeguards designed to ensure greater diversity of media ownership.

I believe that the changes underway will make U.S. media even less diverse, more commercial and less accountable to the public. For many citizens like me, newspapers are the news and information provider of choice, and a welcome alternative to the television news. An independent newspaper educates readers and serves as a center for public policy debate. Truth, accuracy, clarity, fairness and timeliness are the objectives of our free press in the United States. In distinct contrast, the local television news delivers a formula of pursuing tragedy, and trivia to increase profits. Elimination of this rule will essentially signal the

absorption of the newspaper business into the television industry, with a negative impact on the quality of print journalism. Television news organizations have demonstrated that solid investigative news pieces are too expensive of an endeavor to deliver consistently on a daily basis. Furthermore television news companies often fail to address specific questions in regards to public policy, and often fail in its mission to accurately and completely inform a democratic society.

In 1996 the telecommunications act raised the number of radio stations that a single company could own and operate in any market area. As ownership has been concentrated into fewer corporate conglomerates, news reporting and local coverage suffers behind an unchallenging programming formula, designed to maximize profits. If radio in the United States serves as the example for the purposes of the First Amendment, to protect public discourse, essential to democratic self government, then these corporations are essentially hijacking radio airwaves by consolidation of ownership through 1996 the telecommunications act, and undermining the diversified voice of our republic.

Do not let this mistake happen again. Please maintain the current laws in place that prohibit a media company from owning both a newspaper and a TV station in the same geographic area.